



Black & Pink



a family of  
LGBTQ  
prisoners and  
"free world"  
LGBTQA allies  
who support  
each other

## January 2012 Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! The Vietnamese Zodiac considers 2012 to be the year of the Dragon. Unlike the Western calendar that we are most familiar with, the Vietnamese calendar is rooted in the movements of the moon. Rather than the Zodiac signs transitioning throughout the months, the Vietnamese Zodiac signs revolve with the yearly cycle. The year of the dragon is of particular relevance to us. Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese revolutionary who was key in defeating the French imperialists in 1945 and a leading figure in the defensive action by the Vietnamese against US invasion, wrote in a poem, "People who come out of prison can build up the country/Misfortune is a test of people's fidelity./Those who protest at injustice are people of true merit./When the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out." You are these dragons, mythical creatures of great power, honor, creativity, and strength.

This year of the dragon gives us cause to reflect on our strategies for survival and liberation. One of the greatest signs of power is humility, the capacity to confess our errors, take account of our areas of growth, and listen to the experiences of others. All of us, regardless of whether we are guilty of what the court has convicted us of, have caused harm to others, broken relationships, or simply acted in ways that contribute to the brokenness of the world. This reality does not make us evil, it makes us human. We are not living lives to model perfection. We do, however, need to take responsibility and be held to account for our ways of being. This is what helps us create the world we wish to live in.

Our friends at Generation Five, whose website defines them as an organization, "working to end the sexual abuse of children within five generations." Their mission continues, "We work to interrupt and mend the intergenerational impact of child sexual abuse on individuals, families, and communities. Through survivor and bystander leadership development, community prevention and intervention, public action, and cross-movement building, generationFIVE works to interrupt and mend the intergenerational impact of child sexual abuse on individuals, families, and communities. We integrate child sexual abuse prevention into social movements and community organizing targeting family violence, racial and economic oppression, and gender, age-based and cultural discrimination, rather than continuing to perpetuate the isolation of the issue. It is our belief that meaningful community response is the key to effective prevention." While their work is focused on child sexual abuse, their methodology and strategies for justice can apply to all of us. Their understanding of collective responsibility for harm and division is key for us as LGBTQ folks, as people victimized by the prison industrial complex, and as people who have caused harm to others.

Generation Five has introduced the approach of "Transformative Justice." Transformative justice involves not only the individuals directly involved in the moment of conflict or harm but includes bystanders who remain silent, an understanding of the systems of oppression we all live under, and other community people. Their analysis and organizing has led them to four goals of transformative justice, "The goals of Transformative Justice are: Safety, healing, and agency for survivors; Accountability and transformation for people who harm; Community action, healing, and accountability; Transformation of the social conditions that perpetuate violence - systems of oppression and exploitation, domination, and state violence." It is our responsibility to learn more about this system of justice and figure out how to transform our own lives and communities. Black and Pink commits to using the pages of our newsletter, throughout this year, to introduce these concepts and offer opportunities to engage together.

Again, happy New Year! May this year of the dragon be the year we see all the prison doors open because once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

In loving solidarity,  
Jason

Hi to all of my Brothers and Sisters,

I just received the October Newsletter and had to write! I have been in the Texas prison industrial complex for the last 25 years, I'm 45 years old and I am a transsexual. You would think that after 25 years I would see some changes in how the GLBTQ population is treated, but me saying that things have gotten better in the 25 years that I have been here would be a lie. We are still the faggots in their eyes and we are still ridiculed by the staff and the non GLBTQ population, we still have to endure threats of violence and sometimes sexual assault and sexual harassment! I am here to say that we can overcome some of the hardships just by being a friend to someone who has suffered from the prejudiced people in this place. Just showing a little kindness to someone who has suffered just because he/she is part of the GLBTQ population lets them know that they are not alone, that they have a friend!!!

[...] And to all of my Brothers and Sisters of the GLBTQ prison population, keep your head up and remember that you are not alone! Stay safe and stay strong!!!

Lots of Love!

Amanda, Texas



Dear B&P Family,

Yes kiddies, it the confused-ass Mystique. Listen, I know I just wrote ya'll explaining how yes, I'm bisexual/ bigender- and I am- but because of my spiritual/religious beliefs (Christianity) I believe it's wrong, and I had renounced the lifestyle, but you all- Damn it!- it's so hard! I'm sick of fighting what/who I am inside. I can't anymore! Unfortunately, there's no way to change/circumvent what beliefs are so deeply ingrained in me, so even though when I free "Mystique" from her cage I feel happy & free, yet also I must feel that at the expense of shame & guilt. It's effed up!

I feel so alone! Please, is there anyone like me out there who is gay/bi/trans but doesn't want to be? Please tell me I'm not the only freak out there who for whatever reason, in unable to be Gay/Bi/Trans and Proud? Please tell me I'm not the only queer who doesn't want to be queer, yet finds so much satisfaction & fun in indulging by bisexuality & bigenderism?!

Please, if there are any like me, please write to the Newsletter and say so- I assure you, you're not alone! I'm here and if no one else does, I understand what you're going through. Hopefully, me sharing my struggles openly will encourage other's to share their own & know they're not alone. I sure hope I'm not alone as I feel. Well, for the record, as for me renouncing my "Mystique," forget it! It's not happening right now! I'm just not happy that way. But it's lonely and depressing to be surrounded by people who are gay and proud, or homophobic gay bashers, or str-8 and don't care either way about other's sexuality/preferences. I love you all! Happy Thanksgiving!

Your leader in Texas, Love,

Mystique



Hi everyone. Well, this is my first of hopefully many submissions to such a great Newsletter! I have been wanting to send something, but wasn't sure what. And I read October issue about a sister of mine here and well, I feel I must write this.

To my Sister who struggled with being transgender and Christian, you thought you would be hated for your religious beliefs. I'm sorry you think that, it's not true. I even read my bible and believe in God.

Sometimes we all don't understand each other and have arguments. Even though we brothers/sisters have disagreements, we should talk about it, we have enough haters as it is, we got to stick together. Unity & Solidarity. I also am hated for trying to wear make up in here at times, but I still do it, 'cause nowhere in TDCJ policy or rule book does it say we can't wear make up. I've checked this out. I have several copies of grievances I have filed for discrimination, harassment, & threats. And of course they never do any good, but I have copies of all paperwork just in case I'm ever able to go a step further.

But my friend, and everyone struggling with the pieces of them selves that don't always seem to fit together, don't be upset. Smile. You still my family. Hopefully this helps you realize we all make mistakes, but we all must learn from them as I'm doing. Keep your head up and keep up the great work you doing with Black & Pink Family. I read every Newsletter and every article.

With all my love, hugs, and sweet kisses to all,

The one & only, gay and proud,

Precious, Texas

THIS IS DEDICATED TO MY SISTERS IN THE SYSTEM... THAT LOVED ME FOR ME AND CONTINUALLY SUPPORTED ME, DURING MY STRUGGLE OF REALITY... FOR THE ONES THAT STOOD BY ME WHEN I REALIZED MY LIFE WAS CHANGING ITS WAY... THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO STOOD UP WITH ME TO SAY "NO WAY"... TO THE TREATMENT, THE VIOLENCE, <sup>THE</sup> FEAR, BIAS IN PRISON... TO STRENGTHEN MY COURAGE WHEN IT IS OR IT ISN'T... MY FAMILY IN HERE HELPED ME THRU THE FEATS... THE ONLY ONES LEFT, ARE THE ONES ON THE STREETS... MY ART & MY POEMS MAKE PEOPLE FEEL A LOT BETTER. BUT THIS ONE IS MINE... MY "COMING OUT" LETTER!

TITLE:

"ABOUT...  
COMING OUT."

BY J. "GX #01" ALVIS  
SOLEDAD, CA.



Hello friends,

It was recently that the area where I am incarcerated was hit with a "flash flood." If you could only hear the power and anger that transpired that day you would then understand why I wrote this poem, as I gazed out into those heavy drops. This "flash flood" brought on a wave of emotions because I could feel, or relate, to that sudden need to purge. It released in me my own personal "flash flood." As quick as it came, is as quick as it left, but it left behind a clearer day and a clearer soul. Enjoy! -Roger, California

## Flash Flood

The sky is angry;  
Hear the noise

The Heavens are crying;  
Tears grandiose

Open up, Let it out;  
Drop a tear, Scream or Shout

Wash away the fear, the hate;  
Purge yourself, it's not too late

To take a look at all that's lost;  
And expect your actions have a cost

It might be big, It could be small  
It's all the same, A Tumble, A Fall

The trick you see is to know  
you're down  
The goal you need is to get off the ground

So stand again, It's easy, Believe  
That in this moment, You will achieve

-Roger, California



## Goodbye Grandma

U.\$. nuclear testing killed my Grandma  
Downwind from Dreamland in Southern  
Utah

Bone, ovarian, or thyroid cancer  
Grandpa gets a paycheck

A state stipend minus the answers

First Nation Hogans host nuclear sites

Southern Blacks entertain industrial landfills

My hometown's nothing but hillbilly whites

Best damn tapwater this side of the  
Catskills

Uranium mined with buffalo bones

Radiation Nation with glued on cell phones

Praise to the troops, the lords of our God

Bringing home the plastics

Hip hip hoorah

Natives pow wow with war cry and war step

Brittle bones banging on cow leather drums

European migrants chew beef and shift

Lexus

Burying toxic steel drums in between

Seinfeld re-runs

Too hot on this planet

How the waters they rise

No shade without rainforest

Nor answers without whys

In our day everything seems pregnant with its contrary (Marx)

The deception we practice on nature will take its revenge (Hegel)

I am become death, destroyer of worlds (Bhagavad Gita)

The time has come we must face our end

Chernobyl, Rio Puerco, Japan, Three-mile Island

South of Dreamland there's no pretending

Mankind's eternal night- BOOM- is descending

-Brandon, Utah

# Must I Still Hide

Don't judge me because I'm different  
 from what you call the norm  
 Maybe the freaks in the mirror  
 and maybe I'm in good form  
 I want to sign a song of gay  
 telling what we've got  
 I want to hear average men  
 admit we've got a lot  
 We're not so very different  
 one big melting pot  
 We've got a lot in common  
 more than we have not  
 The pain of always knowing  
 but knowing I can't tell  
 To share it in the shadows  
 I've come to know so well  
 To save my friends and family  
 I've bottled up inside  
 One day the door will open  
 No longer must I hide



# Why is Being Gay Bad?

-Billy, Texas  
 Why is being gay bad?  
 We are born like you  
 We dress like you  
 We have the same joys and hurts as you  
 We love our families like you  
 We love our partners like you  
 We make friends like you  
 So why is being gay bad?  
 Because you chose to not understand

-Jay H., Pennsylvania



# Which Pill Do I Take

Touched by the foul hand  
 of hatred  
 I ran into the night  
 the saving shadows,  
 hoping, hoping, hoping  
 desperately for  
 release.

The burning hatred  
 was for a society that  
 helped and hindered  
 my development,  
 for priests who raped  
 add politicians who smiled  
 while trying to murder me.

The animosity,  
 so stifling,  
 kindled inside of  
 me  
 something  
 obscene

What to do  
 with  
 such  
 passion?

Some say  
 sex, drugs,  
 and rock-n-roll  
 is a panacea,  
 a cure-all.

Some say  
 theories help.

Some say this  
 and some say that,  
 and so far,



# California prison hunger strikers propose '10 core demands' for the national Occupy Wall Street Movement

*Black & Pink celebrates the work of the NARN Collective Think Tank in composing these demands.*

*Prisoners have an impact on social justice movements in the "free world".*

by Heshima Denham, Zaharibu Dorrough and Kambui Robinson

**1. We want full employment with a living wage for all people who will work, and for employment to be enforced as the right which it is.** The U.S. Declaration of Independence states in part "that all men ... are endowed ... with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." "Life" is thus a right guaranteed by this nation and the means to live – work, making a living wage for all of those who will and can work – must be equally guaranteed as the right which it is – as must a guaranteed income for those who can't work. This is the responsibility of the federal government. If the corporate U.S. businessmen will not provide full employment even as they sit on trillions of dollars in cash reserves fleeced from the surplus value of labor, then the means of production should be taken from them and placed in the community so the 99 percent of the people can organize and employ all the people, ensuring a quality standard of life for all.



**2. We want an end to institutional racism and race- and class-based disparities in access to, and quality of, labor, education, health care, criminal defense, political empowerment, technology and healthy food.** We recognize institutional racism – the U.S. race caste system – and systemic class disparities in the U.S. capitalist structure as not simply an obstacle to equitable educational opportunities, labor access, wage equality, proportionate rates of chronic disease management, access to quality and preventable health care services, non-predatory community policing, equitable treatment of criminal offenders, access to the political process for all, access to communications technology, the internet and fresh, unprocessed foods but as structural features of U.S. market capitalism primarily designed to prevent broad class cooperation between the 99 percent from various racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We will no longer allow this divide and rule arrangement to govern the socio-economic relationships upon which the nature and structure of U.S. society is based.

**3. We want decent and affordable housing for all people and for it to be enforced as the right which it is.** We recognize that housing, like living wage employment, is a fundamental necessity of life and as such a right that we have invested this government with securing on our behalf. Instead, government has consistently sided with those on Wall Street, who are responsible for the single greatest loss of housing in the nation's history, while federal, state and local officials have in essence criminalized homelessness and chronic poverty and made a practice of attacking, destroying the property of and displacing the homeless wherever they've tried to erect shelters in this locked, anti-poor society. Since it was corporate greed, government deregulation and financial speculators that led to the creation of exotic financial instruments like credit default swaps and sub-prime loan bundles which fleeced the 99 percent of much of their wealth and home equity, the government should mandate a "cost of living" readjustment to home equity debt on all U.S. homes so what the people owe actually reflects what these properties are now worth. This would eliminate "underwater" homeowners and bail out the 99 percent of the people for a change. Simultaneously, vacated and empty federal housing authority properties (FHA) should be made into cooperatives so that our communities, with government aid, can create and build decent housing for all.

**4. We want affordable and equal access to higher education for all and access to education that teaches the true history of colonialism, chattel slavery, repression of organized labor, the use of police repression and imprisonment as tools of capitalist exploitation, and the perpetuation of imperialism in the development and maintenance of modern U.S. power systems and corporate financial markets.** As current trends in the national unemployment rate indicate – for the 99 percent nationally, the rate is 14 percent for Latinos, 17 percent for New Afrikans (Blacks), yet only 4 percent for those with a college degree – higher education has a direct correlation to socio-economic opportunity and prosperity. Since equal opportunity is a fundamental right of U.S. citizenship, the 99 percent should have equal access to higher education without speculative corporate profiteering in industries related to higher education driving up tuition costs and student loan interest rates to usurious levels, leaving most in perpetual debt and simply pricing the very prospect of higher education out of reach for those in communities of color and the poor. *Continued next page...*

There should be a universal higher education system open to all based on their capacity to pay with tuitions set at that capacity level, while not barring anyone for an inability to pay. Simultaneously, the usurious debt incurred by students who clearly have no capacity to pay at a sustainable rate should have those debts forgiven in full. Our public education system should give all our people a knowledge of the true nature and structure of U.S. capitalist society and its legacy of injustice, genocide, exploitation, intentional underdevelopment, unjustifiable wars of imperialist aggression to secure new markets, resources and spheres of influence, bloody conquest, ecological mismanagement, slavery and murder in service to the development and maintenance of the molding of greed that is the 1 percent ruling elite.

**5. We want an immediate end to police brutality and the murder of oppressed people in the U.S., particularly in the New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and underclass communities and among those protesting in this nation.** We recognize the police and other state paramilitary agencies – sheriffs, FBI, correctional guards etc. – are, and have always been, the enforcement army of the ruling 1 percent. This was again proven when these fascist forces moved nationally, en masse, to attack, pepper spray, beat, destroy the property of, arrest and attempt to crush the national Occupy Movement and its supporters at the two-month anniversary of the worldwide action and every day since. We recognize such brutal and unwarranted treatment is the daily existence of New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and underclass communities and people in this nation now, and historically, all to ensure the 1 percent “keeps us in our place,” the unfortunate victims of the race/class arrangement.

Self-defense is a human right and both the action and means are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and state laws (see the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and California Penal Code Section 50). We believe community organized oversight and self-defense forces should be organized to monitor and record all police interactions with the people and defend them against ruling class directed and racist attacks when necessity dictates. The hypocrisy of the government and media is exposed as they criticize Syria, China and Iran for attacking peaceful protestors while they do the same across the U.S. daily. We will suffer no more attacks like those at UC Davis, no more Scott Olsens, Fly Benzos or Oscar Grants to be injured or killed at the hands of the tools of the 1 percent.

**6. We want an end to the expansion of the prison industrial complex, as a profit base – from our tax dollars – for the disposal of surplus labor and the poor.** We want an end to the use of indefinite solitary confinement torture units in the U.S. as they are inhumane and illegal. The mass incarceration of people of color and the poor will no longer be tolerated as an acceptable alternative to enforcing socio-economic equality in America. The disproportionate distribution of wealth, privilege and opportunity in a society is the origin of all crime. The U.S. has one of the greatest disparities between haves and have nots on earth. As a result, the U.S. has the largest prison population on the planet with some 2.7 million of our citizens in prison, 67 percent of them New Afrikans (Black) or Latinos, though they constitute only 26 percent of the nation’s population.

The prison population in the U.S. has exploded some 60 percent since 1981, with state and federal prison budgets in excess of 100 percent of billions of our tax dollars a year lining the pockets of corporate interests that build, supply and maintain these prisons, jails, courts and staff, not to mention the labor aristocrats like the CCPOA (California Correctional Peace Officers Association) guards union, who’ve created a socio-economic and political power base that guarantees their job security and ever increasing salaries and benefits, while maintaining a lobbying stranglehold on state politicians. We recognize, in the face of such a corrupt cabal of government and business, the purpose of imprisonment in the U.S. now has little to do with public safety and rehabilitation and more to do with the development of a self-perpetuating, poverty-fueled, recession-proof industry and an accompanying socio-political accommodating labor aristocracy of prison guards, cops and staff as a support base for the interests of the ruling 1 percent.

Prison is a socially hostile microcosm of society’s contradictions, possessing the same race/class and state/class contradictions that currently define the socio-economic inequality that is capitalist Amerika. Prisons serve as warehouses for surplus labor, the poor and those who have been forced to the bottom rung of society. It is the systemic race/class disparities, intentional criminalization and underdevelopment of poor communities and social apathy which have forced most offenders into the underground economy as the only viable option to survive. This is unacceptable and unsustainable, equally repugnant, fundamentally inhumane, and illegal as the continued gross violation of the U.N. Convention Against Torture – to which the U.S. is a signatory and we agree is the law of the land – which prohibits long-term solitary confinement for extracting information, political views or as punishment for any reason – which is the very purpose of SHU units – as torture, but it is being practiced in numerous U.S. prisons with government approval. The continued indefinite confinement of human beings in SHUs, SMUs and other supermax torture units must be abolished in the U.S., as they violate the basic tenets of human rights this nation has sworn to uphold. The basis of true rehabilitation, such as tech and computer-based vocational programs, access to higher education for prisoners and community-based parole boards must become the new order of the day. This is the only way to guarantee true justice in an unjust social arrangement and see our imprisoned citizens are capable of making a meaningful contribution to our society and prosperity.

**7. We want an end to all corporate and financial influences in the political process in the U.S.** We recognize, since its inception, the nature and structure of U.S. society has been one of the rich, for the rich and by the rich, in which the 99 percent have served as a source of exploited labor and a consumer market for the goods and services of those who own the means of production. This pattern of usurpations has evolved into a political process in which public policies and elected officials are more often than not determined by lobbying dollars, *Continued next page...*



manipulation of public opinion by corporate-controlled mass media, and the overwhelming influence of financial markets and industries on policies and policymakers, effectively marginalizing the people, their interests and their will, reducing them to pawns in a game of corporate pandering. This will stop now. The U.S. will finally become a nation of the people, for the people and by the people, where only individual citizens may have any influence in the nature and structure of the democratic process in the U.S. This means banning all lobbyists, donors, financial market proxies, strategic advisers and special interest groups from local, state and federal electoral and legislative processes in the U.S. We are sick of this "legalized" corruption.

**8. We want an end to imperialist wars of aggression and sending our youth off to kill and die to enforce the economic interests of big oil and other corporate concerns seeking new resources to exploit, new markets to open for sale of their goods and services and as an impetus to keep from addressing domestic ills.** We recognize, as Bolton Hall said, "If there is a war, you will furnish the corpses and the taxes and others will get this glory. Speculators will make money out of it, that is, out of you (us)." Thousands of our young men and women died in Iraq and across the Middle East and caused the deaths, either intentionally or unintentionally, of many thousands more Third World people, all based on the lies of greedy and bloodthirsty politicians with multiple ties to big oil and corporate interests. The current administration has only slightly modified this same imperialist tendency by shifting it to a more palatable target at the cost of billions of our tax dollars and thousands of our youth that could have been contributing to the prosperity of the nation and its people. We support our young men and women, but we do not support imperialism.

**9. We want a bottoms-up approach to economic development and labor-capital relations in the U.S.** This nation is empowered by "we the people," the 99 percent, to secure our rights to life, liberty, and prosperity; yet we recognize the state has aligned itself so intimately for so long with the exclusive interest of the ruling 1 percent that it has become enamored exclusively to a top-down approach to socio-economic and political solutions which always favors the rich first and everyone else when or if possible. This has resulted in a 281 percent increase in the growth of wealth in the top 1 percent of this nation, while the bottom 90 percent have seen their incomes flat over the past 20 years. We recognize that this fascist alliance between corporate capital and government has become obstructive to the ends of securing the rights of life and prosperity to the 99 percent of this nation's people and will now come to an end. Socio-economic and political policy must now uplift the quality of life from the bottom rung up – empowering the disenfranchised, providing opportunities for those with no options and directing bailouts and subsidies to the people, not banks and billionaires. We recognize the state has thus far been a tool to guarantee the dominance of one class over others, of the 1 percent over the 99 percent, and that arrangement will now come to an end.

**10. We want a more equitable distribution of wealth, justice and opportunity at every level of society, reflecting the objective reality that it's the socio-economic, political, intellectual and cultural contributions of the 99 percent upon which this society stands.** We recognize that there is enough food in this nation that no one need be hungry, enough unoccupied structures in this nation that no one need be homeless, enough educators, institutions, knowledge and technology in this nation that no one need be without a degree or skilled trade, enough work to be done that no one needs to be without a job; and it is only due to the insistence of an entrenched, super-rich 1 percent and their stranglehold on every institution and apparatus of this nation's infrastructure from the government to the mass media that their opulence and privilege be maintained at the expense of the 99 percent. We recognize that this is not our national reality, the ruling class has mismanaged our society – woefully and criminally mismanaged – and those in power at every level are either unable or unwilling to change the nature and structure of capitalist society. So it falls to us, the 99 percent, to forge a new basis upon which socio-economic relationships will be based, ushering in a new social order in Amerika and around the world, that serves the interests of all the people and not simply the privileged few.

But what must be understood is social movements of this nature are supported only to the degree that their ideas find resonance in the psychological structures of the masses, but even this is not enough. To ensure the realization of any substantive change in the nature and structure of U.S. capitalist society and to prevent this movement from being isolated and neutralized by the forces of repression, it must be firmly embedded in as broad a cross-section of this population as possible.

There are some 47 million people in Amerika living below the poverty line, another 150 million or so barely getting by – two thirds of this nation's population, all of them part of the 99 percent. It is here that we will find our most lasting support, and thus it is here that you must begin forging meaningful ties. These are overwhelmingly New Afrikan (Black), Latino, immigrant and poor communities.

You champion us all with your ideas and the courage of your convictions, just as we continue to support you with our sacrifices and insight. It is now time to take the movement to its next evolution and ultimately to its inevitable conclusion: victorious revolutionary change.

Your greatest power lies in your unity and cooperation and ultimately your organizational ability. The power of the people far surpasses all the repressive violence of the Babylons attacking you/us or the wealth of the 1 percent, who will stop at nothing to silence us all.

This is a protracted struggle; there will be no 90-day revolution here. Victory will require sacrifice, tenacity and competent strategic insight. The question you must ask is, Are you prepared to do what is necessary to win this struggle? If you answer in the affirmative, commit to victory and accept no other alternative. The people, as we are, are with you.

**Until we win or don't lose, our love and solidarity to all those who love freedom and fear only failures.**



## Fire & Smoke: Bo Brown and Prison Abolition, Part 5 of 5

Bo Brown did not waste anytime restarting her activism in prison. She became a jailhouse lawyer, offering informal legal advice to other inmates. At Alderson, she pressed the prison to stop allowing male guards supervise female inmates while showering.(40) This seemingly obvious measure is still absent in prisons across the nation. Today, Amnesty International's first recommendation to stem the mistreatment and abuse of women in prison is to allow only female officers to guard female prisoners.(41) This rejection of self-evident logic is what characterizes the modern prison industry. Psychologists and sociologists routinely stress the importance of parental involvement in a child's successful development.(42) Yet, 80% of adult women in prison have children, and most of them are single moms.(43) Though women in prison become the captive victims of sexual abuse and lose the right to raise their children, prisons remain the preferred solution to social ills.

In 1986, Bo Brown was paroled to San Francisco where she continues her struggle against the prison industrial complex. Within a year after her release, Brown co-founded the Out of Control Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners.(44) She sees the outside support people gave her as essential for helping her make it through her prison term, and questions why every city in America does not have a prisoner support committee.(45) She does not regret her actions as part of the Brigade and, in reference to mistakes that were made, notes that there are no schools that teach revolutionary struggle, so it is all principled guesswork. She also still firmly believes that no great social reordering can occur without a revolt or rebellion, because "the rich people, greedy people, and mass-murdering motherfuckers who run the world . . . ain't gonna give it up."(46) Only the people at the bottom can force radical social change.

The trajectory of American abolitionism has been long and often violent. It took the slave revolts and the Civil War to end the slave society, and it will take real struggle to end the prison society. The intensified oppression of women under the weight of a racist, classist, and sexist prison system ensures that women like Bo Brown will always be at the forefront of that struggle.

(40) Daniel Burton-Rose, "Guerrillas in Our Midst." Lip Magazine 15 February 1999, [www.lipmagazine.org/articles/featrose\\_9.htm](http://www.lipmagazine.org/articles/featrose_9.htm) [cited April 26 2007].

(41) "Abuse of Women in Custody: Sexual Misconduct and Shackling of Pregnant Women: Recommendations" Amnesty International [http://www.amnestyusa.org/Abuse\\_of\\_Women\\_in\\_Custody/Recommendations/page.do?id=1108306&n1=3&n2=39&n3=720](http://www.amnestyusa.org/Abuse_of_Women_in_Custody/Recommendations/page.do?id=1108306&n1=3&n2=39&n3=720) [cited May 6 2007].

(42) Zoann K. Snyder-Joy and Teresa A. Carlo, "Parenting Through Prison Walls" in Crime Control and Women ed. Susan L. Miller, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publication, 1998), 130.

(43) Robin Templeton, "She Who Believes in Freedom: Young Women Defy the Prison Industrial Complex" in The Fire This Time ed. Vivien Labaton and Dawn Lundy Martin. (New York: Anchor Books, 2004) 256.

(44) Burton-rose.

(45 & 46) Brown, interview.



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tion, how a group of people making calls or  
writing letters can help)

## Write to B&P!

## Write to B&P Art!

\*\*\**New Address as of January 2011!*\*\*\*

Black and *Pink*– Newsletter Subscriptions

Black and *Pink*– Newsletter Submissions

Black and *Pink*– Pen Pal

Black and *Pink*– P2P

Black and *Pink*– Developing Leadership

Black and *Pink*– Erotica

**\*\*New September 2011\*\***

Black and *Pink*– Religion

**\*\*New September 2011\*\***

Black and *Pink*– Volunteer

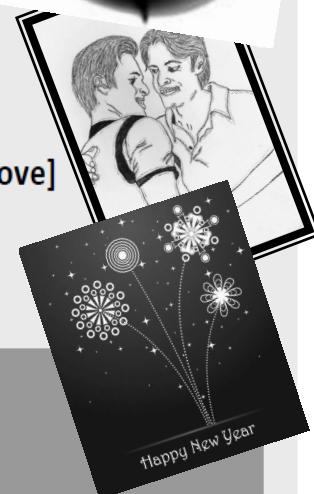
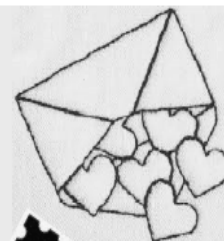
**\*\*New October 2011\*\***

Black and *Pink*– Advocacy

**\*\*New October 2011\*\***

Black and *Pink*—[Insert Topic from Above]  
c/o Community Church of Boston  
565 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02116

Black & Pink Art c/o Reed Miller  
200 Amory Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



**LEGAL:** Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. "Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work."

**Lambda Legal, National Office 120 Wall Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10005, 212-809-8585**

Another resource to turn to, if you can afford the subscription (\$24 yearly, payable with new stamps), is Prison Legal News. This resource was co-started by a former gay prisoner, Ed Mead, though now it is run by Paul Wright. You can reach them by writing to: **Prison Legal News, P.O. Box 2420, West Brattleboro, VT 05303**

**SURVIVORS:** Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor.  
**Ms. Chris Daley, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010**